

Coastal Building Maintenance, Op-ed| Matthew Sullivan

HELPING A CRITICAL ECONOMIC ENGINE RETURN TO NORMAL IN THE WAKE OF COVID-19

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Since the outbreak of COVID-19, regions around the world have been required to shut down to reduce the spread of the virus. This has caused a global economic crisis, impacting many industries, especially hospitality. Globally, seven out of 10 hotel rooms are vacant¹. As areas such as South Florida depend on millions of dollars earned through this industry, hotels are eager to reopen. According to the American Hotel & Lodging Association, 44% of Florida hotel employees will lose their job due to the dramatic decrease in occupancy². It is critical for hotels to navigate these complicated times and find effective ways to prepare for the return of guests and employees while reducing the risk of contracting COVID-19 during their stay.

Miami Beach hotels are expected to reopen to guests on June 1st with reduced occupancy in addition to implementing social distancing and new hospitality standards. Social distancing is the most basic way to combat the spread of the virus, however, according to the World Health Organization (WHO), COVID-19 can live on surfaces for days depending on the surface's temperature and environment³. As a result, hotels need to take extra steps to ensure disinfection is integrated into daily routine and maintenance protocols. Ways hotels can do this include:

- **Bring in a clean health consultant** – Having a trained professional who is dedicated to ensuring a facilities cleanliness provides the peace of mind and confidence needed as guests enjoy their stay and employees return to work.
- **Introduce daily electrostatic spraying into daily maintenance protocol** – Using electrostatic spray disinfection helps provide high-traffic areas with an extra layer of protection. The disinfectant spray particles are positively charged, allowing them to cling to and coat surfaces more evenly and sanitize four times faster than a traditional cleaning. Using this method eliminates the chances of human error while providing full coverage disinfection. Based on our experience, it's the most efficient and cost-effective way to properly disinfect.
- **Install hand sanitizer stations at hotels entry points and common areas** – As South Florida begins to reopen, providing hand sanitizer stations at all entry points is a practical way to protect individuals from the spread of germs. Experts say that those who encounter other individuals while at work or at a hotel should apply hand sanitizer every two to three hours⁴.
- **Hotel Employees** – Recommending all on site staff should have easy access to hand sanitizer and not have to stop and wash hands regularly or look for hand sanitizer stations. We are encouraging all our clients to have a small 2 oz bottle around their belt buckle for easy and quick access. These can be filled regularly in the back of the house or employee areas.
- **Hand Sanitizer bottles** – All hotel rooms should be supplied with a 2 or 4oz bottle of hand sanitizer, with at least 70% alcohol, similar to a bottled water or shampoo or conditioner bottle. This should be the new normal for amenities for their guests.
- **Replace air filters regularly** – Air filters capture particles from the airstream prohibiting toxins and impurities from being disbursed through vents. Replacing these filters regularly allows for optimal filtration and the reduced spread of bacteria through a hotel's airways.

¹ <https://www.forbes.com/sites/halahtouryalai/2020/05/13/hotels-are-getting-crushed-by-coronavirus-how-will-they-recover/#29fbc8fb16e6>

² https://www.ahla.com/sites/default/files/fact_sheet_state_covid19_impacts_0.pdf

³ https://www.who.int/docs/default-source/coronavirus/risk-comms-updates/update-20-epi-win-covid-19.pdf?sfvrsn=5e0b2d74_2

⁴ <https://www.cleanlink.com/hs/article/Advantages-To-Offering-Hand-Sanitizers--18521>

- ***Monitor guests' stay*** – Hotels should analyze every aspect of a guest's stay including items they come in contact with like decorative pillows, clothes hangers and minibars which should be removed all together from rooms going forward.

These new hospitality standards are being implemented to promote long term protection to employees and guests. For example, Hilton launched a new program in response to the pandemic called "Clean Stay" in partnership with Lysol maker, Reckitt Benckiser.

The road to recovery is expected to take several years. As president of the leading South Florida janitorial and maintenance company, [Coastal Building Maintenance](#) (CBM) and the new, leading South Florida Clean Building Solutions company – CB Disinfection LLC. Our goal is to help businesses and facilities transition into a new normal and to help them maintain the standard of "clean" that are to be expected by customers, guests, and employees. This has been our profession over the last 25 years and we are proud to be able to be a calm influence for our customers as we all continue to educate ourselves on the new normal. As we work to take every necessary precaution together, we can flatten the curve and steadily repair South Florida's economy.

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